

Message Text

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ACTION EB-07

INFO OCT-01 NEA-10 ISO-00 CAB-02 CIAE-00 COME-00 DODE-00

DOT-00 INR-07 NSAE-00 FAA-00 AGR-05 /032 W

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R 291002Z JAN 76

FM AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9960

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E.O. 11652: NA

TAGS: EAIR, IS

SUBJECT: CIVIL AIR: CHARTER SERVICE TO ISRAEL

REF: (A) STATE 16195; (B) TEL AVIV 0644

1. DAVAD MENDELSON, WORLD AIRWAYS VICE PRESIDENT, HAS COMPLETED VISIT TO ISRAEL WHERE HE MET WITH GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS, ISRAEL AIRCRAFT INDUSTRIES (IAI), EL AL AIRLINES, AND REPRESENTATIVES OF AIR TRANSPORT COMPANIES. DESPITE EMBASSY EFFORTS ON HIS BEHALF, HE WAS UNABLE TO OBTAIN APPOINTMENT WITH MINISTER OF TRANSPORT YAACOB. YAACOB'S OFFICE CLAIMED THAT HE WAS PREOCCUPIED WITH EGGED BUS STRIKE BUT MENDELSON SUSPECTS THAT YAACOB DID NOT WISH TO DISCUSS CHARTER ISSUE WITH HIM AT THIS STAGE.

2. MENDELSON HAD GOOD DISCUSSION WITH MINISTER OF TOURISM KOL WHO IS URGING, BOTH PUBLICLY AND WITHIN GOVERNMENT, APPROVAL OF HETH COMMITTEE FINDINGS ON CHARTERS (SEE REF B). KOL STATED THAT CHARTER ISSUE WILL BE EXAMINED BY CABINET SHORTLY AFTER PRIME MINISTER RABIN'S RETURN FROM U.S. AND DECISION IS EXECUTED QUOTE WITHIN MONTH OR SO UNQUOTE. HE BELIEVES THAT GOVERNMENT'S DECISION WILL BE FAVORABLE TO CHARTERS.

3. IN CONVERSATION WITH EL AL PRESIDENT BEN-ARI, MENDELSON OBTAINED IMPRESSION THAT EL AL IS PRETTY MUCH RECON-

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CILED TO SOME EASING OF ISRAELI POLICY ON CHARTERS. EL

AL, HOWEVER, WILL PUSH HARD TO LIMIT CHARTERS TO GREATEST EXTENT POSSIBLE AND TO OBTAIN ASSURANCE THAT EL AL WILL RECEIVE HEFTY SHARE OF NEW CHARTER BUSINESS. FOR EXAMPLE, BEN-ARI SAID HE BELIEVED GOI WILL WISH TO RESTRICT CHARTER SERVICE FROM U.S. TO SAN FRANCISCO AND LOS ANGELES AND TO ONLY CERTAIN TYPES OF PASSENGER GROUPS. EL AL, FOR ITS PART, WILL INSIST ON CHARTER RIGHTS TO SAME TWO POINTS WITH 50 PERCENT OF BUSINESS RESERVED FOR EL AL. MENDELSONH NOTED THAT BEN-ARI WAS VAGUE ON HOW MARKET SHARE CONCEPT COULD BE ENFORCED, EVEN IF USG AGREED TO SUCH AN ARRANGEMENT.

4. MENDELSONH ALSO HAD PROMISING DISCUSSIONS WITH ISRAELI AGRICULTURAL EXPORT OFFICIALS ABOUT POSSIBILITY OF LEASING WORLD AIRWAYS 747 FOR TRANSPORT OF ISRAELI FARM PRODUCE TO EUROPEAN MARKETS. AS DEPARTMENT IS AWARE, PAN AM IS NOW OPERATING ONE 747 FLIGHT PER WEEK FROM TEL AVIV TO FRANKFURT UNDER QUOTE FREIGHT CHARTER UNQUOTE TO EL AL FOR TRANSPORT OF AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTS.
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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: SUPPLEMENTAL AIRLINES, AIR ROUTE AGREEMENTS, NEGOTIATIONS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 29 JAN 1976
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: morefirh
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1976TELAV00733
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D760034-0107
From: TEL AVIV
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1976/newtext/t1976017/aaaaagci.tel
Line Count: 81
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION EB
Original Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 76 STATE 16195, 76 TEL AVIV 644
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: morefirh
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 10 JUN 2004
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <10 JUN 2004 by ElyME>; APPROVED <25 JUN 2004 by morefirh>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
04 MAY 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: CIVIL AIR: CHARTER SERVICE TO ISRAEL
TAGS: EAIR, IS, US, WORLD AIRWAYS
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006